Goal E6 – Continue the Mesa Falls Recreation Corridor partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.

Goal E7 – Utilize the Sheridan Ranch property for grazing or to assist with the acquisition of additional property to enhance the boundaries of Harriman State Park of Idaho.

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Chapter VII. Resource Area & Facility Designation

Resource Area Designation System

Introduction

The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation is charged with the dual mission of protecting and conserving the resources of the state park system and of providing recreation opportunities and facilities for public use. Classification of Harriman State Park of Idaho as a Natural Park recognizes the significant wildlife and scenic resources that are treasured in the park. The sense of solitude, tranquility and retreat that visitors experience is what brings many of them back time after time. Harriman State Park of Idaho also has a strong historical component, with its ranching heritage and the nationally recognized historic district in the ranch building complex. Outdoor recreation is the pursuit that brings most of Harriman's visitors to the park, with its world-renowned stretch of the Henrys Fork and miles of trails. All of these many resources present diverse and high quality interpretive, educational and recreational opportunities.

Resource area designations define the pattern for human activity in a given area. They establish the character of a place by determining what happens, where it happens, and to what degree it happens. They control use and development, and arranges park activities and facilities in such a manner as to obtain a balance between visitor enjoyment of the park and protection of park resources.

Purpose

Some resources such as historic structures, archaeological and paleontological sites, and sensitive riparian and wetland habitats, require greater protection than others. Development and recreational activities have to be limited in these areas. Other sites are suitable for intensive recreation, camping, trails and interpretive facilities. To integrate land characteristics, protection needs and area-specific suitability for development and/or recreation activities, a resource area designation system has been developed for use in parks statewide. This system considers the unit's classification and purpose, the area's resource values and sensitivities, recreation potential, and desired visitor experiences. Resources of national, statewide or regional significance are to be considered of high value and importance. Archaeological and paleontological sites and historic structures are of high value. Specific factors used in evaluating resource values include rarity, endangerment and uniqueness. Resource sensitivity is a term used to qualify the degree to which a resource can be adversely

affected by human activity. Cultural and natural resource sensitivities play key roles in determining appropriate development and use in specific areas. The designation of resource areas is based on analysis and integration of resource management and protection objectives, resource constraints, and resource sensitivity information.

Procedure

A resource area designation system has been developed to classify all lands managed by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Six levels of protection (or appropriate levels of development/activity) are recognized in this system. These levels span a wide range of resource management strategies, from low resource impact management in the S*cientific Area* to high resource impact management in the *Recreation* and *Service/ Support Areas*. All land within a state park shall receive resource area designations during the preparation of the master plan for the unit. Depending upon the unique characteristics of each park, any or all of the six resource area designations may be utilized; however, it should not be expected that all resource area designations will appear in all parks. Resource areas are approved by the Idaho Park and Recreation Board with its adoption of the plan. Resource area boundaries may be refined during the preparation of subsequent implementation plans by park staff. Resource area changes or relocation of resource area boundaries require staff analysis, justification and Board approval.

Descriptions of these six resource area designations, management objectives, resources area characteristics and typical activities are outlined below. The area map depicting the various resource area designation boundaries for lands administered by Harriman State Park of Idaho is shown on the Resource Area Designation Map. A breakdown and amplification of the Resource Area Designation System is presented in tabular form in Appendix 2.

Scientific Area

On a Resource Area map, the *Scientific Area* is designated with the letter (S).

Description - *Scientific Areas* encompass resources that have unique or exceptional natural, scenic, and educational value. These may include: outstanding geological formations or features illustrating geological processes; fossil evidence of the development of life on earth; an ecological community illustrating characteristics of a physiographic province or a biome; a biota of relative stability maintaining itself under prevailing natural conditions, such as a climax community; an ecological community illustrating the process of succession and restoration to a natural condition following disruptive change.

Management Objectives - The primary objective is to protect and perpetuate the individual features of unique natural or scientific significance or areas of land or water which possess inherent conditions of exceptional natural, scientific or educational value.

Physical development shall be limited to the facilities absolutely necessary for protection, research, and educational projects, and where applicable for interpretive services. Human access to *Scientific Areas* is limited to educational and scientific purposes. Appropriate management may include prohibition of use to protect the resource from degradation. This resource area shall be adequate in size to protect the values within the area. Resource modification can occur in this resource area to maintain or restore these areas in as natural a state as possible.

Resource Area Characteristics - Although *Scientific Areas* are primarily established to safeguard unique resources, these areas have certain characteristics and atmosphere that cumulatively and subconsciously impart the desired visitor experience. These areas are isolated, relatively inaccessible and free of all but natural sounds. As visits to these areas must be approved by park staff, visitors to these areas are assured a personal experience that is undisturbed by other park users.

Typical Activities - Activities causing extremely low impact to the natural resources, such as guided interpretive walks and scientific study.

Natural Area

On a Resource Area map, the *Natural Area* is designated with the letter (N).

Description - Lands and waters containing outstanding natural communities and possessing natural integrity. This area encompasses exceptional geologic, wildlife, botanical, riparian, and riverine environments. *Natural Areas* are established to promote, to perpetuate, and where necessary, to restore the natural character of the land.

Management Objectives - The primary objective is to preserve the resource in a near-natural state. Appropriate management includes protection of the resource from degradation, inappropriate development, and over-use. Resource modification can occur in these resource areas only to maintain or restore these areas in as near-natural state as possible.

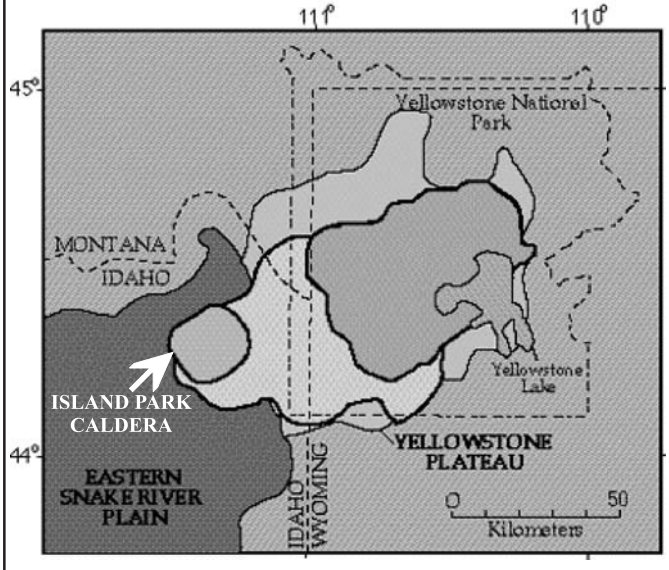
Resource Area Characteristics - *Natural Areas* have certain characteristics and atmosphere that cumulatively and subconsciously impart the desired visitor experience. These areas are secluded, with subdued noise levels

The Island Park Caldera

Lying along the northern and western edges of the Railroad Ranch is Thurmon Ridge, one of the most visible remnants of the Island Park caldera's western edge. The Island Park caldera is one of three gigantic caldera eruptions that exploded through the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The first and largest caldera, Huckleberry Ridge, was centered in western Yellowstone National Park. It blew up 2.1 million years ago. The Island Park caldera was formed 1.3 million years ago. It lies just west of Yellowstone, within the western part of the Huckleberry Ridge caldera. The third and most recent eruption created the Lava Creek caldera 650,000 years ago. It overlaps the Huckleberry Ridge caldera, but its eastern boundary lies about 10 miles farther east.

Calderas are large basin-shaped volcanic depressions, more or less circular in form. They are created when volcanoes erupt with such force that they eject tens to hundreds of thousands of cubic kilometers of magma onto the earth's surface. When such a large volume of magma is removed from beneath the volcano, the ground collapses into the emptied space to form a huge depression called a caldera.

The Island Park caldera, the smallest of the three in the Yellowstone caldera group, is nearly circular in formation. It is eighteen miles wide and twenty-three miles long. The southern caldera boundary is the rim of Ashton Hill. The northern boundary is the north bank of the Henrys Fork just beyond Mack's Inn, Idaho. The western boundary consists of Thurmon Ridge and Big Bend Ridge. The eastern boundary was lost in the creation of the Lava Creek caldera.

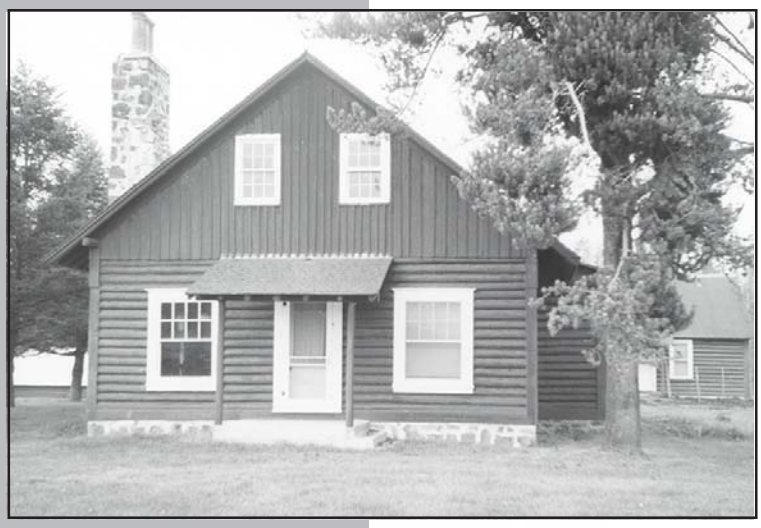


and a serene, peaceful environment. In these areas, a visitor may occasionally encounter individuals or small groups seeking a similar experience.

Typical Activities - Activities causing low impact to the natural resources, such as hiking, wildlife watching, photography, cross-country skiing, dispersed picnicking, small-group interpretive walks, and boating activities that do not degrade the environment or detract from the desired visitor experience.

Conservation Area
On a Resource Area map, the *Conservation Area* is designated with the letter (C).

Description - Lands and waters offering a variety of resource values including: open space, scenic, aquatic, geological, wildlife, botanical, soil stabilization, watershed protection, buffers, etc. *Conservation Areas* are established to accommodate low to moderate resource impact and dispersed forms of recreation and to act as buffers from or transitions to other resource areas. *Conservation Areas* are relatively undeveloped.



Management Objectives - The objectives of these areas are to provide for both use and protection of the resource. Facility design and area management should establish limits on use to ensure resource conservation. Resource modification can occur in these areas to provide both moderate levels of recreational opportunity and/or conservation of the natural resources.

Resource Area Characteristics - *Conservation Areas* have certain characteristics and atmosphere that cumulatively and subconsciously impart the desired visitor experience. This transitional area is characterized by dispersed, sporadic activity. Noise levels vary from relatively quiet to fairly noisy, depending upon the occasion. Visitors to these areas will frequently encounter other individuals and groups of park users.

Typical Activities - Activities causing low to moderate impacts to the natural resources, such as mountain biking, picnicking, cross-country skiing, fishing, dispersed swimming, boating and special events. Also included are the activities listed in the *Natural Area* above.

Historic Area
On a Resource Area map, the *Historic Area* is designated with the letter (H).

Description - These areas encompass structures and features of significant historic, cultural, archaeologic or architectural value.

Management Objectives - Preservation of historic and structural integrity is of paramount importance. Emphasis will be placed upon provision of opportunities for education and interpretation in and around areas, structures and features

of historic, cultural, archaeological and architectural value. Appropriate management is to facilitate visitor appreciation without degradation of the resource.

Resource Area Characteristics - *Historic Areas* have certain characteristics and atmosphere that cumulatively and subconsciously impart the desired visitor experience. Although able to accommodate groups of visitors, these areas are quiet, passive and thought-provoking. During periods of peak use, visitors to these areas are almost certain to encounter other visitors seeking the same experience.

Typical Activities - The historic area is a moderate use area for historic-period preservation, restorations, and interpretation. Activities include those causing low impacts to the resource, such as personal inspection, photography, scientific study, small-group interpretive walks and special events. Recreation-related facilities are generally secondary and will be separated from the site(s) of historic/cultural resources by sufficient buffers. Activities in keeping with the historical period of the historic/ cultural resources are encouraged.

Recreation Area

On a Resource Area map, the *Recreation Area* is designated with the letter (R).

Description - Lands and waters offering moderate to high levels of diverse recreation and development opportunities, with a secondary function of conserving the natural character of the surroundings.

Management Objectives - The primary objective of a *Recreation Area* is to provide recreation opportunities so that park visitors can safely enjoy the park and its resources. Appropriate management is to facilitate recreation without irreparable resource damage. The highest level of development and activity in a park is intended to occur within this resource area. *Recreation Areas* are established where the soils, slope, drainage and vegetation can support intensive recreational activities. The landscape within this area can be substantially modified to meet this objective.

Resource Area Characteristics - *Recreation Areas* have certain characteristics and atmosphere that cumulatively and subconsciously impart the desired visitor experience. These areas are public and dynamic. They are readily accessible, busy, crowded, noisy and characterized by almost continuous activity. Visitors to a *Recreation Area* during periods of peak use are certain to encounter many other visitors engaged in a wide variety of recreational and social activities.

Typical Activities - Typical activities include those causing potentially moderate to high impacts to area resources, such as developed camping; group sports; developed picnicking; boat mooring, launching and beaching; swimming; beach activities; non- motorized trail use; motorized trail use; parking; outdoor interpretive programming; and overnight lodging in dorms, lodges, cabins, yurts or recreational housing. Also included are the activities listed

in the *Natural* and *Conservation Areas* above.

Service/Support Area
On a Resource Area map, the *Service/Support Area* is designated with the letters (S/S).

Description - Lands necessary to provide services to park visitors, housing to park employees, and support the maintenance of park facilities, equipment and vehicles.

Management Objectives - The primary objective is to support activities in the other five areas in a safe, efficient, and economic manner. Although activities in this area are essential to the other areas, they are not necessarily aesthetically compatible. Appropriate management is to centralize service, support and maintenance functions in specific, limited areas buffered from activities in the other areas. Facilities in this area should be designed and managed to efficiently accommodate the maximum levels of use anticipated.

Resource Area Characteristics - *Service Support Areas* have certain characteristics and atmosphere that cumulatively and subconsciously impart the desired visitor experience. *Service Support Areas* providing visitor services are readily accessible, busy, noisy and characterized by continuous daytime activity. Visitors to *Service Support Areas* during daylight hours are certain to encounter many other visitors seeking services and engaged in a wide variety of recreational and social activities. *Service Support Areas* supporting staff functions only, e.g., park maintenance and staff housing facilities, are not open to the public.

Typical Activities - Typical visitor activities include park admission, registration, fee collection, visitor information, retail sales, indoor/outdoor interpretive programming, provision of developed moorage, developed parking, and concession operation. Staff activities include seasonal and permanent employee housing and activities associated with shop buildings, storage yards, fueling facilities, and utility stations.

Management Concept Selection Process

In response to the issues, concerns, desired opportunities and experiences expressed by 74 participants at 6 input workshops, 46 participants with written input, and 410 survey respondents during the input phase of the planning process, the following three management concepts were created.

A Stand-Alone Park
This concept addresses outdoor recreation and resource education pursuits available within the boundaries and resources of Harriman State Park of Idaho. In this concept, the majority of existing and/or new visitor uses would continue to take place on that portion of property most widely identified as the park—the Railroad Ranch. Harriman East would provide some visitor use as could a portion of Section 16 on the west side of Thurmon Ridge. Sheridan Ranch could be retained for a

grazing concession or it could be used to assist with the acquisition of other property to enhance the boundaries of Harriman State Park of Idaho for other recreational uses.

Island Park Community Trail Linkages

This concept addresses partnerships between Harriman State Park of Idaho and other public and private entities in the Island Park area to provide community trail linkages. It provides all of the opportunities of the stand-alone park concept, plus it diversifies the visitor trail use off the Railroad Ranch. It provides recreational and commuter trail linkages from the junction of the Buffalo River with Highway 20 in Island Park to Pinehaven, south of Harriman State Park of Idaho.

Henrys Fork/Mesa Falls Recreation Corridor

This concept addresses a multi-entity partnership in which Harriman is a mid-point in the Henrys Fork/Mesa Falls recreation corridor. This recreational corridor extends from the Buffalo River in Island Park to Bear Gulch south of Mesa Falls. This concept provides all of the opportunities of the stand-alone park concept, plus the greatest dispersal of recreational uses throughout the region. It allows for partnerships and cross-promotion of existing recreational facilities in the Island Park area. It provides for the greatest range of opportunities and protection of solitude by dispersing recreational uses across a larger area. It also provides the potential for multiple-mile trail linkages for both summer and winter users.

Along with these three management concepts, a full outline of the comments received during the input phase was developed into a range of opportunities. (See Appendix 3.) The joint Harriman State Park of Idaho master plan Citizen Advisory Committee and staff Planning Review Team met on January 12, 2002 to "flesh out" the details of the management concepts utilizing input from the range of opportunities. The result was the management concepts information booklet. (See Appendix 4.)

Public open houses were held in Boise, Idaho Falls and Island Park on February 19-21, 2002 to introduce the management concepts and seek written comments. Copies of the management concepts booklet were also mailed out to the Harriman State Park of Idaho master plan mailing list.

The joint master plan Citizen Advisory Committee and staff Planning Review Team met on April 6, 2002 to review the comments received and to craft a preferred management concept from among the three initially presented. Below is the result of that meeting.

"The Preferred Management Concept provides a multi-entity partnership in which Harriman is a

mid-point in the Henrys Fork/Mesa Falls recreation corridor. This recreational corridor extends from the Buffalo River in Island Park to Bear Gulch south of Mesa Falls. This concept provides dispersal of recreational uses throughout the region. It provides year-round recreation opportunities and additional trail linkages for non-motorized users to the existing motorized trail system from the junction of the Buffalo River with Highway 20 in Island Park to Harriman State Park of Idaho and south to the Mesa Falls Recreation Area and Bear Gulch. It allows for partnerships and cross-promotion of existing recreational facilities in the Island Park area. It provides for a wide range of opportunities and protection of solitude by dispersing recreational uses across a large area.

"Within the boundaries and resources of Harriman State Park of Idaho this concept addresses outdoor recreation, resource protection and educational pursuits. The majority of existing and/or new visitor uses will continue to take place on the 4200-acre portion of property most widely identified as the park—the Railroad Ranch. Harriman East will provide additional recreation opportunities. Sheridan Ranch could be retained for a grazing concession or it could be used to assist with the acquisition of other property to enhance the boundaries of Harriman State Park of Idaho for other recreational uses."

The goals and objectives outlined in chapter 5 provide implementation for the preferred management concept.

Proposed Development, Land Use Plan & Facility Designation

Proposed Development

The proposed development is focused on enhancing the outdoor education and recreation experience of Harriman State Park of Idaho visitors. From their first sight of the park at the entrance, to their welcome at the visitor center, to their use of park facilities, it is the goal of this master plan to provide Harriman State Park of Idaho visitors a rewarding and memorable experience.

Development proposals recognize the park's Natural Park classification and value of open space. All developments listed below are on lands that have current development or have been previously disturbed.

Major Park Entrance at Highway 20

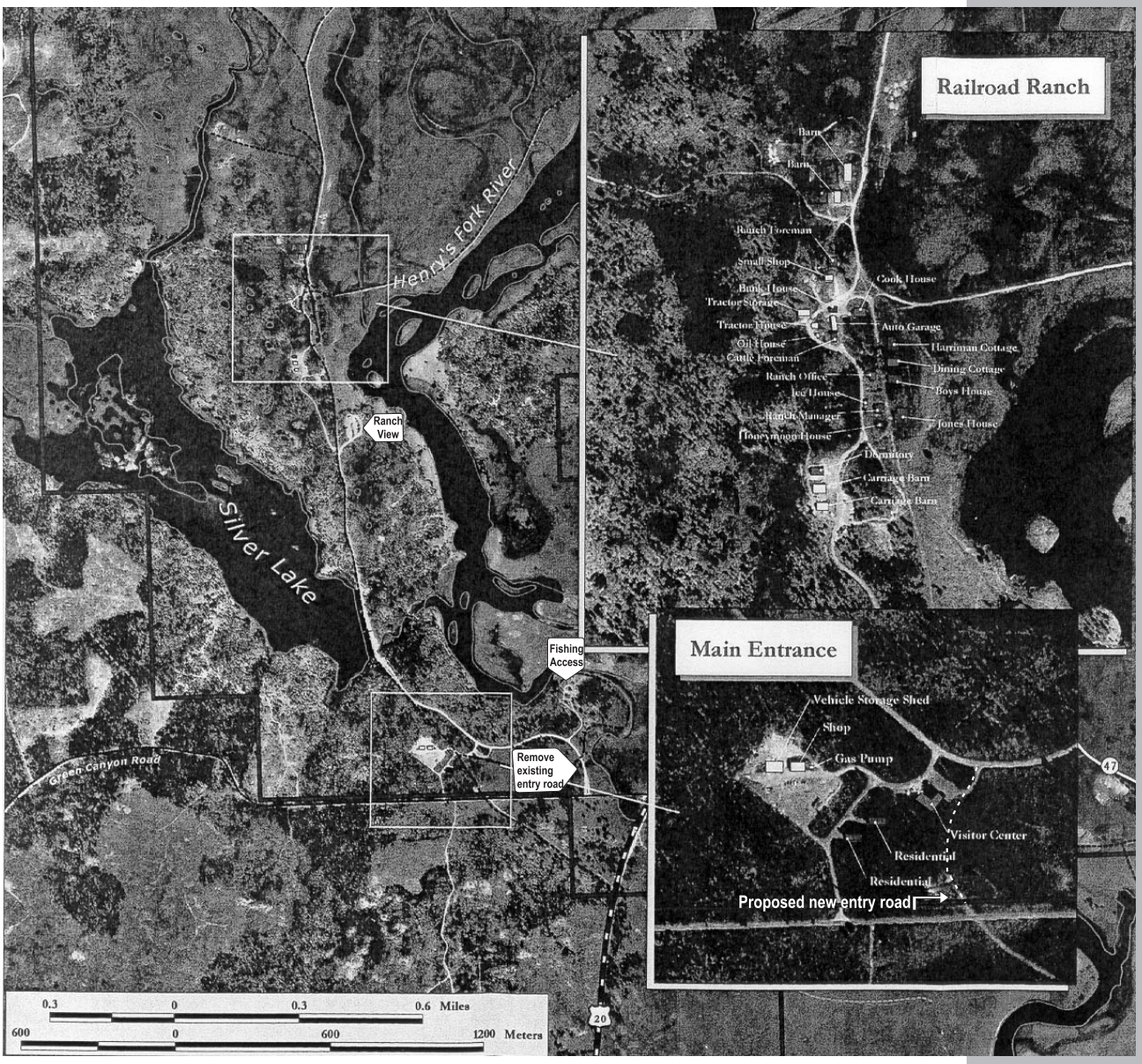
This is a major landscape project at the intersection of Highway 20 and Green Canyon Road. It will help define the main visitor entrance and create an inviting gateway into the park. It will be rustic in design and incorporate large timbers, rocks and shrubs in the landscaping. Along with marking the entry off Highway 20, north and south boundaries of the park along Highway 20 will be marked with rustic wood and

masonry Harriman State Park of Idaho boundary signs.

Rerouted Park Entry off Green Canyon Road

The roadway leading to the visitor center will be rerouted off Green Canyon Road from its current location to a point farther west, at or near the historic ranch entry. This will route all cars by the visitor center for information, orientation and education before dispersing visitors to other areas of the park. (See Map 7.2.)

Harriman State Park - Railroad Ranch
Infrastructure with some Proposed Changes



Map 7.2
Railroad Ranch
Infrastructure
with proposed
entrance
realignment.

Construct Log Cross-Beam Ranch Entry Gate

Historic photos show a large Island Park Land & Cattle Company Ranch gate constructed of logs. The intent of this development is to construct a similar gate of large timbers, sized to fit today's vehicles, with a routed "Harriman State Park of Idaho" sign displayed on the gate.

Redesign and Enlarge Park Headquarters/Visitor Center

The existing park visitor center will be enlarged to incorporate all visitor center functions. The visitor center will provide park information, orientation and education, and serve as the primary contact point for park visitors. All park visitors will be directed to the visitor center and dispersed from there. Components of the visitor center will include: Orientation of the entire park and related regional resources; staffed information station; interpretive exhibits of Harriman State Park of Idaho key themes; multi-purpose space (meetings, classroom); gift shop sized for anticipated use; offices for park and visitor center administration/services; restrooms; outdoor orientation exhibits/maps; cross-country ski warming space; outdoor plaza.

Redesign and Enlarge Park Headquarters/Visitor Center Parking

The park headquarters/visitor center parking area will be redesigned and enlarged to serve the expanded building's needs and to serve as a major trailhead for the park.

Construct a Restroom at Osborne Boat Launch

Construct a single unit vault toilet at Osborne boat launch to complete the development of the day-use area.

Construct Dining Facility Adjacent to Dormitory

Construct a cooking and dining facility adjacent to the dormitory for dorm users, rather than having them continue to use the ranch cookhouse on the opposite end of the ranch building complex. Design the new facility to blend with the historic character of the ranch buildings. Possibly remodel one of the adjacent dude barns for the dining facility.

Construct Simple Group Shelter at Ranch View

Construct a simple group shelter at Ranch View for outdoor education programs and picnicking. Redesign Ranch View parking area, if needed, to accommodate placement of the shelter.